

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03601 051228Z

45 L

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 PRS-01 L-03 SCA-01 DRC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 /059 W

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O 051032Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4165

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3601

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR KS US

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR VISA

REF: STATE 117396

1. CHARGE CALLED ON VICE FONMIN LHO SHIN-YONG TODAY TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL.

2. LHO STATED THAT FONMIN HAD RECEIVED HIGHEST PRIORITY CABLE EARLY MORNING JUNE 5 FROM AMBASSADOR HAHM REPORTING THAT CSM EDITOR WOULD NOT AGREE TO ORDER POND NOT TO VISIT ROK AND IN FACT EXPECTED HER TO VISIT SEOUL JUNE 6 FOR PURPOSE OF COVERING KIM TAE-CHUNG DEVELOPMENTS. MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED TO VICE FONMIN AT BLUE HOUSE DURING MEETING OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. LHO SAID HE PROMPTLY SHOWED IT TO FONMIN AND THAT DECISION WAS MADE AND TELEGRAM SENT INSTRUCTING ROKG EMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATELY TO REQUEST MISS POND TO VISIT ROK EMBASSY AND TO STAMP HER KOREAN VISA NULL AND VOID.

3. LHO SAID ROKG HAD BEEN "SHOCKED" BY WORD OF POND'S IMMINENT ARRIVAL AND THAT ALL PRESENT AT MEETING HAD AGREED ON NECESSITY TO VOID HER VISA. EVEN THOSE WHO

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MOST CONCERNED OVER POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES THIS ACTION

FELT THAT NEW CIRCUMSTANCES LEFT ROKG WITH NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION. CONSENSUS WAS THAT IT WOULD CAUSE LESS DIFFICULTY TO WITHDRAW VISA PRIOR TO HER DEPARTURE FROM TOKYO THAN TO DEPORT HER UPON ARRIVAL. LHO SAID ROK POSITION REMAINS THAT OTHER CSM CORRESPONDENTS WOULD BE WELCOME TO KOREA, BUT THAT FAILURE TO ACT AGAINST INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR ARTICLE DEFAMING CHIEF

OF STATE WOULD LEAD OTHER CORRESPONDENTS TO BELIEVE THAT ROKG WOULD TOLERATE SIMILAR ARTICLES.

4. CHARGE WENT CAREFULLY THROUGH POINTS CONTAINED PARA 3 REFTEL, STRESSING THAT ACTION AGAINST POND WOULD EXACERBATE ROKG RELATIONS WITH US PRESS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF FACT THAT LA TIMES, NEW YORK TIMES, NEWSWEEK AND CBS CORRESPONDENTS ALREADY PRESENT IN SEOUL AND AWARE THAT POND INTENDING ARRIVE JUNE 6. ALSO EMPHASIZED POINT THAT DEPT WOULD, IF QUESTIONED, HAVE TO EXPRESS VIEWS REGARDING FREE PRESS ACCESS AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE DISCUSSIONS WITH ROKG.

5. CHARGE EXPRESSED STRONG HOPE THAT IT NOT TOO LATE TO OBTAIN REVERSAL OF ROKG DECISION AND ASKED LHO TO CONVEY POINTS HE HAD MADE TO LHO'S SUPERIORS. CHARGE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DECISION WAS ONE FOR ROKG TO MAKE BUT STATED PERSONAL CONVICTION THAT ACTION AGAINST POND WOULD BE MUCH MORE DESTRUCTIVE OF ROK INTERESTS THAN WOULD ADMISSION OF JOURNALIST WHOSE EDITORS HAD PUBLICLY DISASSOCIATED THEIR PAPER FROM OBJECTIONABLE ASPECTS HER PREVIOUS REPORT.

6. LHO SAID HE WOULD PASS ON CHARGE'S PRESENTATION IMMEDIATELY BUT THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT DECISION COULD BE REVERSED.

7. COMMENT: FACT THAT TODAY'S PROCEEDINGS AGAINST KIM TAE-CHUNG LACKED SENSATIONAL ANGLES VIRTUALLY GUARANTEES THAT US CORRESPONDENTS IN SEOUL WILL BE INQUIRING ABOUT HER WHEREABOUTS TOMORROW. NEWSWEEK'S KRISHER TOLD CHARGE THAT POND HAD INFORMED HALLORAN OF HER INTENTION TO COME TO SEOUL JUNE 6 AND THAT KIM TAE-CHUNG'S WIFE HAD TOLD HIM THAT ROKG INTENDED CONFIDENTIAL

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REFUSE HER ENTRY.

8. DURING CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE, LHO GAVE EVERY APPEARANCE OF DISTRESS OVER DILEMMA FACING ROKG, WHICH ANXIOUS IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH US PRESS BUT CANNOT, IN VIEW PRESIDENTIAL SENSITIVITIES, TOLERATE PRESENCE OF PERSON WHO AUTHORED DEFAMATORY MATERIAL. ERICSON

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